

“A House is (not) a Home:”

Theorizing Race, Gender, and Technology at Home

<https://cat2bronstein.wordpress.com>

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This CAT2 course will examine the idea of the American home, family, and domesticity as these concepts and ideologies developed in and around the television. Not only was television physically integrated into the new postwar domestic space (literally built into the structure of suburban homes) but its programming defined new--white, middle class, and suburban--ideas of the home and asserted raced and gendered roles within that space. We will think of television as an active site (vs the boob tube or “vast wasteland”) reshaping the home, inspiring new technologies, and even familial relations (like the advent of the TV dinner). To this end, we will begin by asking what was and is television? In many ways this is a television history class, but we will also consider contemporary television families and how we watch television now--from appointment viewing in primetime to Netflix binging on our computers. In tracking the evolution of domestic tropes (like the housewife or the maid), the technology itself, and how domestic space is articulated as raced and gendered, we will ask questions about what home and television meant and continue to mean as a function of Americanness.

We will use these explorations to hone our writing and critical thinking skills, perform close readings, and learn how to make and support ethical arguments. We will read a combination of academic and popular press articles and watch a lot of television and hopefully these texts will serve as inspiration and models for your course projects, which might include essays; short writing assignments; and a video essay.

Key Course Goals: Argumentative Writing & Citation

- Think critically about visual and written texts
- Identify and understand arguments, both explicit and implicit
- Understand how different kinds of arguments are constructed, how visual arguments persuade, and why some parts of an argument might not be visible or open to debate
- Develop an ability to read, understand, and critique arguments and assumptions in texts in diverse genres including, when appropriate, multi-media texts
- Establish a controlling idea and support it with relevant and carefully evaluated evidence.
- Identify and respond effectively to plausible counterarguments to one's own positions.
- Cite texts and arguments fairly and effectively
- Practice appropriate means of documenting their work

Required Texts/Technology:

- Netflix subscription for the duration of the class
- Access to Triton Ed
- Access to/Follow the course website/blog

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is required in both lecture and discussion and TAs will take attendance. You may miss up to *three* classes total without it affecting your grade. After that, *each additional absence deducts 1/3 of a letter grade* from your final course grade. If you miss more than *six* classes, that will result in an *automatic fail* for the course.

Turning in Your Work & Late Work Policy:

- Assignments are due in hard copy to your TA at times/dates stated on the syllabus (usually at the beginning of your section). You must submit your assignments directly to your TA. Writing submitted late but before the end of the final exam period will be accepted but marked down by one grade notch for every day it is late. You are required to complete and submit all assignments by the end of the final exam period in order to pass the course.
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- Turnitin.com: In addition to hard copies, all graded writing must be submitted to Turnitin.com (on TritonEd) to receive credit. Late submissions will be penalized. If an assignment is not time stamped in Turnitin.com by midnight on the date it is due, it will be reduced by one full grade (ie.: an A would be lowered to a B).

Course Grade Breakdown:

Participation: 10%

Assignment 1 (Close Reading 2-3 pages): 25%

Assignment 2 (Close Reading with sources 2-3 pages): 30%

Assignment 3 (Close Reading Clip Curation): 30%

Reflective cover letter: 5%

Schedule of Classes:

- I reserve the right to change/alter this schedule as the course progresses. The lecture topic loosely represents what we will discuss that day.
- All assignments are *due in discussion* on the day noted on the syllabus.
- Please note that all screenings and readings are required and to be completed, like the reading, before class on the day they are assigned (unless otherwise noted).
- Unless noted (or linked), all screenings can be found on Netflix.
- All your readings are linked below as PDFs or as html links.

Week 1: Introductions & Close Reading

Monday (Jan 9): Lecture: Intro to TV

Wednesday (Jan 11): Lecture: On Representation & Mise en scene

Watch: *Mad Men*, “Pilot” (2007)

Read: [Corrigan](#): Mise En Scene & [Jason Mittell](#), “Why Television”

Friday (Jan 13): Lecture: Cinematography

Read: [Corrigan](#): Cinematography

Watch: *The Honeyymooners*, “TV or Not TV,” Pilot (1955)

Go Over Paper #1 + Shot List Assignment

Week 2: Close Reading, Continued

Monday (Jan 16): No Class/MLK Day

Wednesday (Jan 18): Lecture: Editing

Read: [Corrigan](#): Editing & Sound

Watch: *Bewitched (Season 1, Ep 1)* (1964)

Due in section: Shot Lists & Thesis statements

Friday (Jan 20): Lecture: Argumentation & Why Media Literacy Matters

(and argument and close reading: “She’s a witch”)

Recommended: Danah Boyd, “[Did Media Literacy Backfire](#)”

(also Review Close Reading & Writing about Film Basics)

Week 3: TV & The Suburban Home

Monday (Jan 23): Lecture/Screening: Television, Suburban Homes, & Whiteness

Due in section: Rough Draft of Paper #1

Wednesday (Jan 25): Read: Lynn Spigel, “[Television and the Family Circle](#),” *Make Room for TV*

Watch: *Bewitched (Season 1, Ep 2)* “Be It Ever So Mortgaged” (1964)

Friday (Jan 27): Lecture/Recap: Technology & Home (plus thoughts on revision)

Watch (in class): TBD

Week 4: In the House: The Housewife & The Nuclear Family

Monday (Jan 30): Lecture: The Housewife

Read: Mary Beth Haralovich, “[Sitcoms and Suburbs: Positioning the 1950s Homemaker](#)”

Watch: *The Donna Reed Show*, “[Just a Housewife](#)” (1960) & *American Housewife*, [Pilot](#) (2016)

Wednesday (Feb 1): Lecture: On Friedan and Feminism

Read: Betty Friedan, [Chpt. 1 from *The Feminine Mystique*](#)

Recommended: watch *The Adventures of Ozzie & Harriet*, "[The Fruitcake](#)," (1952)

Friday (Feb 3): Watch (in class): Masculinity & Lecture On Research

Go over Paper #2 Prompt & Annotated Bibliographies

Due in lecture: Final Draft of Paper #1

Week 5: Race, TV Industry, & Home

Monday (Feb 6): Lecture: TV & The Politics of Black Representation

Watch: *Beulah* "[Beulah Goes Gardening](#)" (1952) & *Black-ish* (Pilot)

Murray Forman, "[Employment and Blue Pencils: NBC, Race, and Representation](#)"

Wednesday (Feb 8): Read: "[Why Diversity Needs to be Deep not just Broad](#)"

Watch (in class): *Master of None*, "Indians on TV" (2015)

Due in section: Annotated Bibliographies

Friday (Feb 10): Lecture: On Cities, Gentrification, and Race

Watch: *The Jeffersons* (Pilot)

Week 6: Travel, Space, and Home

Monday (Feb 13): Lecture: Race, Cities, and Suburbs in Space

Due in section: Rough Draft Paper #2

Wednesday (Feb 15): Watch (in class): *The Jetsons*, "[Rosey the Robot](#)" (1962)

Read: Lynn Spigel, "[White Flight](#)"

Watch: *I Dream of Jeannie*, Pilot (1965)

Friday (Feb 17): Lecture: Travel, Immigration, & Ideas of Home

Watch: *Master of None*, "Parents" (2015)

Week 7: Home Technologies

Monday (Feb 20): No Class/Presidents' Day

Wednesday (Feb 22): Lecture: From TV Dinners to Pinterest

Read: Julie Wilson & Emily Chivers Yochim, "[Pinning Happiness: Affect, Social Media, and the Work of Mothers](#)" and "[The Mindy \(Parenting\) Project](#)"

Recommended: "[Mindy Needs to Stay Unlikable](#)"

Watch: *The Mindy Project*, "[Stay at Home Milf](#)" (2015)

Friday (Feb 24): Watch (in class): *Modern Family*, "Connection Lost" (2015)

Week 8: The Real Domesticity

Monday (Feb 27): Lecture: Reality TV

Watch: *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*, "[I'm Watching You](#)" (2007)

Due in lecture: Final Draft of Paper #2

Go Over Final Project

Wednesday (March 1): Watch: *Keeping up with the Kardashians*, "[Managing Mom](#)" (2007)

Read: Alice Leppert, "[Keeping up with the Kardashians: Fame Work and the Production of Entrepreneurial Sisterhood](#)"

Friday (March 3): Hilary Hughes, "[The Year They Stole Kim Kardashian](#)"

Watch (in class) : *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills* (Pilot) OR *Atlanta*

Week 9: Neighbors & Home Surveillance

Monday (March 6): Lecture: Foucault, Surveillance, and Fear

Due in section: Script for Final Project (Peer Review)

Wednesday (March 8): Lecture: Nosey Neighbors

Watch (in class): Castle, “The Lives of Others” (2015) OR *The Americans*, “Pilot” (2013)

Watch: *Desperate Housewives*, Pilot (2004)

Friday (March 10): Class canceled for extra office hours

Week 10: New Homes: College, Dorms, and Greek Life.

Monday (March 13): Lecture: On College Life

Watch: *A Different World* (Pilot) & *Greek* (Pilot)

Recommended: Bring a storyboard to office hours to show your TA or workshop with a friend

Wednesday (March 15): Final Thoughts: Media Literacy, Home, and Talking Race in America

Read: Lydia Kiesling, “[Watch Again](#)”

Friday (March 17): Class Canceled/Extended Office Hours

Finals Week:

Friday (March 24): Final Project Due with Reflective Cover Letter by 8am